

Good afternoon ladies and gentlemen.

I am pleased to be here today, delivering my third State of the County address. I want to thank the Chamber of Commerce for hosting this "Hot Topic Luncheon". Thank you Harriet Whitaker, your staff, and the Board. The Chamber does exceptional work on behalf of businesses in the County, and it is a crucial partner in our community.

I'm sure everyone enjoyed the wonderful meal and we want to thank the Country Cupboard for preparing it and Covenant Community Church for allowing us to meet in their facility.

I appreciate my family, and the mayors, city officials, magistrates, County employees and elected officials who are here today.

Let me take this opportunity to publicly thank each of you for the service you provide, as well as the sacrifices you make to keep our County operating first-rate.

But most importantly I offer my greetings and heartfelt thanks to the people of Hopkins County. It is my pleasure to hold office and to serve you. I appreciate you taking the time to join us today.

County government has lost some dear friends who were with us this time last year. We mourn the loss of Constable Elbert Powell and Magistrate Larry Rogers and also our service men and women whose ultimate sacrifice has preserved the freedoms and way of life we know today. Please join me in a moment of silence in their memory and all those we hold near and dear in our hearts. Thank you.

I feel confident you will all agree this has been a "different" year.

All over the world, it has been one of the toughest economic periods most of us have ever lived through. Jobs were lost...homes were lost...401K's and savings were hammered...wind storms and ice storms played havoc with our local finances and our lives....and we are still in the process of recovering today.

Nothing would thrill me more than to be able to stand before you and say Hopkins County residents have escaped unscathed. But we haven't and we won't.

For the past several years, we've seen financial challenges looming on the horizon, but no one foresaw the depths of this present economic downturn.

But you need to hear me on this: As I stand here today and say with the utmost confidence that - considering the times and the lack of a tax increase this year – the state of Hopkins County is strong.

This is a testament to the professional and fiscal conservative way our County is operated. It is also a testament to the caliber of people who do the hard work of making the county safer, more beautiful, and a great place to live and work. Their services continue to enhance the high quality of life we enjoy in Hopkins County. I cannot talk about our excellent services without taking a moment to thank our 181 dedicated employees, who I see day in and day out working hard to make our County the great place that it is.

But no Government entity can be successful without a healthy private sector. In Hopkins County, we are fortunate to have an economic base with a diverse mix of jobs and employers. However, we are mindful of our business losses this year, and continue efforts to attract new employers to our area.

We also have a thriving non-profit sector who provide essential services to our most vulnerable residents, giving hope and assistance where it is needed most. A wonderful demonstration of their efforts was witnessed during and following the January ice storm.

For all the unprecedented community efforts, volunteers, agencies, churches, organizations, first responders, businesses, police and fire departments, utility companies, city and county employees, citizens, and people who came to assist LET US GIVE A ROUND OF APPLAUSE!!

Let me share our most recent recovery efforts from this ice storm. District #2 Highway Department has collected 1.582 million cubic yards of tree limbs and debris. This is equal topickup truck loads.

Hopkins County is within 2 weeks of completion of the first pass, and the figure includes 697,000 cubic yards in unincorporated areas and 280,000 in the city of Madisonville. The County's cost of cleanup, after FEMA reimbursement is near \$450,450. This has been a costly and time consuming task, but we just have to look about at our beautiful spring flowers, green grass, and blooming trees to know together we have accomplished much since the darkness and cold of January 27th.

I would like to briefly mention some initiatives of the Fiscal Court during the past year:

Lawsuits were settled at no cost to our County include the strip search and the civil lawsuit.

A tile ordinance was passed transferring responsibility for the cost of culvert tile and its installation to the property owner.

We now have a recycling program..."for trash, we pay; for recycling, they pay us" so it is

In everyone's best interest to increase our recycling and minimize our trash.

Barnsley Convenient Center has been opened.

53 Marriages have been performed.

Smoking ban has been passed.

Volunteer fire department dues have been placed on property tax bills.

Video parole hearings are being done by the Jail.

Contract was negotiated with the U. S. Marshalls to hold federal prisoners for \$35 a day Plus \$16 an hour for guards used during transportation.

Assistance Center is operating effectively by PACS.

Chimes have been activated at Courthouse.

Established solid waste charge for commercial/contractor hauling, waived temporarily to reduce expenses to our citizens from the ice storm.

Approved 9 indigent burials.

Community coal severance project funding was approved for: Madisonville-Hopkins County Library; all County Volunteer Fire Departments; Madisonville Community College for coal employment opportunity and workforce development; City of Madisonville for study on relocating railroad tracks out of city; Madisonville Community College School Counts; City of Nortonville for renovation of city hall, library, and museum; North Hopkins water district; Dawson Springs City park building; and for completion of Liberty Church road.

In the area of public safety, weather warning sirens have been installed and activated; School key lock and key card system has been installed; weather station is operational (kymesonet.org), and new GIS information has been made available by the Sheriff's Office.

I solicited input from each County department, asking that they highlight accomplishments made during the past year. I share them with you:

County Attorney's Office: handles nearly 6,000 cases a year and 5,000 active child support files. A 98% conviction rate has been achieved by the prosecution team and the child support unit maintains its position as a Top 20 Unit for the past 6 quarters. There has been a

40% increase in check recovery since 2008. A summer internship program allows local undergraduate and law students to gain experience in the courtroom and office. A local sex offender registry is available in the courthouse and on the internet.

Hopkins County Public Works

Road Department: current value of \$1,010,664 road paving has been accomplished. Additional road equipment has been purchased to assist in road maintenance efforts, including 2 new International trucks equipped with plows and salt spreaders as well as a Gradall 3100.

Sanitation Department: Our County is unique compared to most Counties in Kentucky, in that our citizens are furnished a good solid waste disposal service at little or no cost to them. In 2008, we spent \$1,249,302 while collecting fees/revenues of \$307,161. The County was saved \$70,000 during the year by transporting tires to Webster County. Due to their involvement in a GRADD pilot program, the only cost to our County was transportation.

Hopkins County Jail: The Community Service program was successful and inmate labor of 214,450 hours, at a rate of \$7.00 an hour, saved the County \$1,500,450. This service includes 2 road crews who traveled over 21,000 miles cleaning 1,242 miles of road and 2,484 miles of right of way. In addition to 76 tons of garbage, 132 tons of miscellaneous junk, 2,338 tires, and 3.5 tons of aluminum cans for Habitat, they maintained a mowing schedule for 21 sites, cleaned up 4 illegal dumps, assisted other departments and cities, and built a deck and handicap ramp for the Historical Society.

County Court Clerk's Office: is now offering extended office hours of 7:30 am to 4:30 pm, Monday through Friday. Land records and deeds are currently available online for a low monthly fee. Over 200 deed books (1990-current) have been scanned and over 50,000 marriages have been indexed into the new online system.

Sheriff's Office: the crime mapping project utilized technology to allow citizens to be aware of where sex offenders reside and of crimes that have occurred in their neighborhood. Over 600 crimes and locations have been added to this project.

Also, mobile computers are being added to emergency vehicles. Through this MDT project, Hopkins County likely will become the first County in KY to completely outfit emergency units with mobile data terminals as the result of a Homeland Security Grant through the Sheriff's Office. The program began in 2004 with law enforcement, then by adding first responders, ambulance services, Madisonville Fire Department and Emergency Management. The new grant places computers in County volunteer fire department vehicles, and is geared toward unifying the various County agencies to communicate and share information.

The most recent change that affects the public is on-line reporting of minor offenses to a deputy from home computers. Anonymous on-line tip lines have also been made available.

We commend each department for their accomplishments and encourage them to continue their efforts to better serve you and all our residents.

There are several additional initiatives in progress:

FEMA funds are being requested for our most recent and past damages.

The Regional Sports Complex is being developed. The County accepted 25 acres (\$117,000) from the Hopkins County Tourism Commission and 69.5 acres from Don Bowles (\$315,260 value) to develop a Regional Sports Complex at Pennyrile Parkway and P & L Railroad intersection. This property was previously an abandoned mine site from the 50's. Because of the efforts of Charolais Coal Company to remine And reclaim the area, a Reclamation award from both the KY Department of National Resources and from the Office of Surface Mining was received.

Judicial Center Project is moving forward

Agriculture/Convention Center has been constructed.

South Main Interceptor Sewer Project was begun at a 12/11/08 groundbreaking Ceremony with Governor Beshear participating.

Sewer and water projects underway for Jennmar/J-Lok, White Plains, Nebo, & Hanson.

Rosenwald-Smith Multicultural Center renovation is near completion.

New Cities efforts have improved communication and cooperative efforts throughout our County.

A Cemetery Preservation Board was created and has applied for funds to restore the Cane Run Cemetery.

As you can see, this has been a busy year, and we are pleased with the accomplishments that have been made.

I'm sure we all recall the coal mining song "Sixteen Tons": "You load sixteen tons and what do you get? Another day older and deeper in debt...St Peter don't you call me cause I can't go. I owe my soul to the company store..."

Well, we are proud to answer that differently...coal has proved to have a positive, profound, and long term effect on our County and on our ability to do special projects. In Fiscal Year 2008-2009, Hopkins County received more than \$2,000,000 in coal severance funds.

These funds benefited our entire County through being utilized in the non-recurring grant categories of:

Public health and safety, economic development, public infrastructure, information technology development and public water and wastewater development.

Hopkins County has been very fortunate to be a coal producing county and a recipient of these funds. Our investments to these particular items are representative of a commitment to Hopkins County's forward-focused initiatives and their long term success.

The past is where we have been. We can't change it. We can shape the future starting today. We know decision made by Hopkins County Government now will affect our region for years to come. Our collective task is to strive to bring growth and opportunity to all parts of our County.

Certainly there are several efforts and projects in the planning stage for us, as we continue to plan for the future:

I-69 impact, recommendations for future funding for Stagecoach Road Bridge, expansion of Highway 41A, Madisonville Community College degree expansion, etc.

President John F. Kennedy once said "The American, by nature, is optimistic. He is experimental, an inventor and a builder who builds best when called upon to build greatly."

As we look forward to the rest of the year, I call upon each of you to join our task of building greatly....to ensure that succeeding generations will enjoy the same opportunities, and be inspired by the same dreams.

We owe them nothing less and will continue our efforts with emphasis on fiscal management, education, city and community projects, industrial development, and public safety.

In closing, I want to assure you that your Fiscal Court continues to seek information and work with other agencies and individuals for the betterment of Hopkins County. We are cognizant of the fact that the key to our success as a County is the strength of our community – the interconnected web of businesses, nonprofits, educational institutions, citizens, and government.

As individual threads, each is susceptible to breaking, but when woven into a fabric, our strength is unparalleled.

As well stated by a Japanese Proverb “A single arrow is easily broke, but not ten in a bundle.”

I thank each of you for your interest, your labor, your guidance, and your commitment to our County.

I am appreciative of this time to share information with you, and for the opportunity to serve you and all citizens of Hopkins County.

May God Bless each of you.

Thank you for coming and have a wonderful afternoon.